



Success Story: Taberg Native Is Along For The Ride

Over a dozen years ago, Wendy Washeleski gave her coworker's niece a horse riding lesson at her home. What started out as a hobby is now the 300-acre Fall Brook Stable, a successful small business in Taberg, New York. Wendy left her position as a psychological assistant and started her business in 1996 with two horses and a small outdoor arena. Today, Fall Brook Stable has 19 horses, 4 full-time and up to 10 seasonal employees, and offers a one-stop shop for horse enthusiasts from Camden, Rome, Utica, Boonville, and Westmoreland.

Wendy's business location in her hometown hasn't reined in her desire to travel; she explained "It feels good to be in Taberg. The horse industry allows me to travel all over the country for training and shows, but at the end of the day, I have my business and my family all in one spot and that's all that really matters."

As she gained loyal clients, Wendy continued to reinvest in the business with the purchase of an indoor riding arena in 2000. The indoor arena is the complete opposite of the traditional dark barn- the inverted u-shaped building has a translucent roof that allows daylight to flood the arena. Gradually, Wendy added first and second floor additions to the arena: lockers for clients, an observation room for parents, a full bathroom and more. Growing her business over time was integral to Wendy's plan to be completely self-financed: "I wanted to own my business, not have my business own me," she commented.

Wendy has expanded Fall Brook Stable's services beyond traditional riding lessons to include three-day training camps, group trail rides, 40 hour certification clinics for instructors, pony birthday parties, and most recently, a retail tack shop. "Instead of sending my riders to a tack shop for an item they need for an upcoming show, I now offer them exactly what they need right here. The shop is an added benefit for my clientele and my bottom line," Wendy said.

Last fall, Wendy felt she had reached a plateau in running her business and needed a challenge. While searching online, she came across the Women's Business Center of New York State website and learned about an upcoming free entrepreneurial training course.

"I remember thinking, 'This is too good to be true,'" recounted Wendy. "A 10-week course on how to run a business and it's free?" The Entrepreneurs Skills Training course featured weekly classes on business planning, marketing, media relations, financial planning, legal and insurance issues and more. Wendy graduated from the course on January 21 with 16 other Women's Business Center clients and came away with much more than she anticipated.

"This was my first formal business class ever and it was a phenomenal experience. It heightened my awareness of all aspects of my business. I learned something every week that I can use now or in the future. I especially enjoyed meeting other entrepreneurs and hearing their different input on how to deal with issues."

For Wendy, the training course provided practical means to meet the continual challenge of anticipating and meeting her customers' needs. Fall Brook Stable and its surrounding property is covered in natural beauty, including rolling hills of forest, creeks, and tumbling waterfalls, and at this time of the year, plenty of snow. The tough winter conditions of Upstate New York inspire Wendy to dream of opening a second facility in a warmer climate while maintaining the Taberg location. As Wendy likes to say, "The sky is the limit when you own your own business."